

Elect Exiles

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[0 : 00] Good evening. Greetings from Plymouth, Indiana. It's an honor to be here this evening, to spend this time with other brothers and sisters in Christ, and not only an opportunity to bring the word, but the fellowship, and by God's grace, get to speak to you this evening at some point.

While it's always a privilege to be a guest and to guest preach at a church, a few years back while doing it, I realized that there's a real high potential in these circumstances to be someone's disappointment.

And what I mean by that is this. I know what it's like to love your church, and I know what it's like to love your pastor. And you think everyone in town should be at your church and hearing your pastor. And you tell people at work how great your pastor is, and you love him, and you tell family members how great your pastor is, and you guys should come, and you tell your neighbors, and there's always a reason why they never show up.

But lo and behold, one Sunday night comes, and they surprise you and walk through that door. And you're so excited. And then you realize, hello.

[1 : 20] And then you spend the next hour and a half explaining to them, now this isn't our normal pastor. I get it. So for those of you who might be guests, let me just say the pastor here is amazing, and you will love him.

For those of you who invited someone this evening, let me just assure you that providence and predestination brought us together this evening. I'll actually be speaking about some of that this evening.

You don't have to spend a whole lot of time with me to learn that I love the doctrines of grace.

I believe these essential doctrines are a beautiful thread that's woven throughout all of Scripture, starting in the beginning words of Genesis to the final words of Revelation.

I was a counselor in the secular field for years, and when I started in ministry, I began counseling in the church, and before long, I began using the doctrines of grace to counsel by.

[2 : 33] I find them useful in all types of ministry. And this evening, we will see one of these doctrines on display for us in the Scripture. I ask you to join me in a word of prayer as we prepare to go to God's Word.

Dear Heavenly Father, as we prepare to plumb the depths of your truth, Father God, I pray for our hearts. I pray for the soil of our hearts to have been cultivated, to take the truth that you plan to plant, Father God.

I pray for our eyes, that they see what you desire us to see in your truth, and our ears, that they hear the truth which will come from your word. Father, I pray for conviction and wisdom that comes from your word, Father.

And I thank you for the opportunity to share with brothers and sisters your truth, and to be here at this moment speaking your truth and your truth alone. And I pray these things in your Son's precious name. Amen.

Amen. Our text this evening is the opening of the first epistle of the Apostle Peter. If you're unfamiliar with this letter, I cannot encourage you enough to journey into the richness and truth that flows out of it.

[3 : 48] What a treat for any believer to study the words in 1 and 2 Peter. Our text this evening is 1 Peter 1, verses 1 and 2. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who reside as aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood.

May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. Now, theologians over the years have debated who the audience of this letter may be. In one camp, you have those who believe Peter's writing to Jews who were converted to Christ, who fled Jerusalem due to persecution.

In the other camp, you have those who believe this is addressed to Gentile believers. Passages later in the letter reference previous life before conversion that would lead us to believe that they were Gentiles they were speaking of.

And the five cities listed in verse 1 were all cities within Rome, the Rome-ruled nations. And these areas were hostile to believers. What can be agreed upon is this fact.

These two letters were written to believers under persecution, under immense pressure from the culture around them, believers who were struggling with the surrounding cultural circumstances, believers who found themselves in hostile territory.

[5 : 27] Peter opens this letter introducing himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, the common apostolic greeting, because to those apostles, it was more than just a title.

I mean, it came with an apostolic authority, but it was also who they were. Their lives were defined by their service to Christ. We live in an age today where claiming to be a Christian is done so flippantly.

Many have no real understanding of what that is, no understanding of what it entails to be a believer in Christ, a follower of Christ.

Many treat it as a political affiliation. Mom and dad were Christians, so I'm a Christian. For others, it's what they are by process of elimination.

I'm not a Muslim. I'm not a Hindu. I must be a Christian. Rather than it being who you are, it's your very being. It's everything about you.

[6 : 30] And in the face of a secular world culture that despises it, the identity of the believer, if they don't understand that, can suffer. In the years I have been doing ministry, I've noticed two troubling trends.

Many churches and many believers in our nation have become far too concerned with being relevant rather than being righteous. They've become concerned with fitting in or being represented correctly to a culture that despises them for who they are.

Every time an actor gets an award and makes a reference to God or Jesus Christ, you have those in the church circling the wagons to say, yes, he's one of us.

He represents us. Finally, somebody. Finally, a cool person is representing them, they feel.

Forgetting the fact that the movie that he just starred in, he portrayed a character who took the Lord's name in vain and was promiscuous and murdered and all that aside, there's just this desire to be accepted.

[7 : 47] For too many people in church today, they desire to sit at the cool table in the cultural cafeteria. They don't want to be outcasts. They don't want to be seen as different.

And sadly, many men who fill the pulpits on Sunday mornings, they practice the same behavior. They desire to look and talk and act like the culture, all in the name that they would say of reaching the culture.

And this trend has been prevalent for years, seems to be increasing. The second troubling trend that I see those in the church having over the years is this belief in politics over a belief in God. The notion that everything will be better for us if only the right person occupies the White House. Listen, I would love for our leaders to have hearts that pursue Christ.

But God does not need the White House to bring about His will. I've seen so many people in the church become so defeated and distraught over an election.

[8 : 57] God's not wringing His hands hoping an election's going to turn out the way He wants it. It's going to turn out exactly how He designed it. It brings me to my point in bringing these things up.

We can get so caught up in wanting things easy for us and wanting the world around us to accept us and wanting the culture around us to accept us.

Wanting our politicians to be exactly how we want them so everything's fine and easy. And we can feel defeated and distraught when they're not. Yes, we're not facing personal, physical persecution here in our nation, but we are facing a culture that rejects us.

And for far too many in the church that troubles them. Peter's writing to those believers facing real persecution. He's reminding them who they are in the face of cultural rejection.

We see right in verse 1, to those who reside as aliens. And the ESV says elect exiles. As believers, we are aliens. We're exiles in this world. We're no longer a part of this world or their culture.

[10:20] And right at the end of verse 1, and I love that it doesn't even take Peter two verses to get right into the doctrine of election here. He just jumps right in. who are chosen.

The word used there in the Greek, *eklektos*, it means the select. It's used to describe one chosen out by God. And we see this doctrine throughout the New Testament. Luke 18, 7, now will not God bring about justice for his elect?

Romans 8, 33, who will bring a charge against God's elect? Ephesians 1, 4, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before him.

1 Thessalonians 1, 4, knowing, brethren, beloved by God, his choice of you. 2 Thessalonians 2, 13, but we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation.

I don't know about you, but I'm starting to sense a theme. God has always had an elective nature. We see that throughout the scripture. We see in Ephesians 1, 4, that he chose us before the foundation of the world.

[11:29] In eternity past, God chose us. Romans 9, 10 through 12, not only this, but there was Rebecca also then.

She had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac, for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad so that God's purpose according to his choice would stand not because of works, but because of him who calls.

It was said to her, the older will serve the younger, just as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. Before Jacob and Esau were born, God, because his choice is based on his will and his purpose.

Not anything to do with us. He elected to love Jacob and hate Esau. There's nothing Jacob or Esau could bring to the table that would make them worthy.

God's choice is based solely on him. So the apostle Peter is telling these believers who have been dispersed into hostile regions, they're exiles in hostile lands.

[12:34] They're living every, they're living as aliens in these lands. and they're living just as every single genuine Christian lives in this fallen world today.

We are aliens. We are no longer part of this fallen world. We've been called out and not called out randomly. Not called out because we earned it.

Not called out because we deserve it in any shape or form. We're called out because we're chosen. We're elect according to nothing we could do, nothing we could bring to the table.

Nothing that makes us worthy of it. In verse 2, we see what this is according to, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

The Greek word there for foreknowledge is the word *prognosis*. It's where we get the medical term *prognosis*. It means previous determination. We are chosen according to God's previous determination.

[13:37] And this aligns right with Ephesians 1.4. Let that sink in for a moment. In eternity past, before any creation of this world, God, if you are a believer, you are so only because God determined you would be.

And then he gave you to his son. A love gift from a father to a son. A betrothment of a bride to a groom. He gave you to the son and the son loved that gift.

That gift would be corrupted by sin. It would be separated by sin. Become lost due to sin and the son redeemed that gift.

The son paid the price so that gift could be redeemed and made perfect. As a believer, you are part of that gift. And every single person that the father previously determined by giving them to the son would be saved.

It's why Jesus can confidently say in John 6.37, all that the father gives me will come to me. And the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out.

[14:52] Jesus, the son, does not reject the gift given to him from the father. God draws them to the son.

God draws them by the Holy Spirit. They are sanctified by the spirit, verse 2 of our text, by the sanctifying work of the spirit. The Holy Spirit, the very person of the Holy Spirit enters into those who God previously determined to draw and the Holy Spirit begins a sanctifying work in the

believer.

So many people struggle with this doctrine. And why? Because they want to believe they determined their own salvation. That they somehow played a part in determining if they were saved or not.

I love that Jesus when speaking to Nicodemus in the book of John answers the Jewish teacher and his question on how someone can be saved. He says, you must be born again.

It's a great way of saying it because you had no control over your first birth and you have zero control over your second. This is not frightening. It's not scary.

[15 : 59] This verse, the believer, should be the most comforting, just the immense comfort that's found in this aspect of their salvation because if any aspect of your salvation was determined by you, if any aspect of my salvation was determined by me, I would have been damned day one.

It was God who sovereignly chose and elected to save me. It was God who sovereignly chose and elected to save you.

It was God who sovereignly chose and elected to save one man's family prior to destroying all other human life on this planet by water. It was God who sovereignly elected to carve out of rebellious man a people onto himself.

It was God who sovereignly elected to love Jacob and hate Esau. It was God's sovereign election to call and sanctify you by and with his Holy Spirit.

and he did so not on a whim, not based on you. He did so in eternity past.

[17 : 25] It's funny. As I'm going through these notes, I keep thinking of testimonies and I can tell you that the people at my church, the congregation at the church I preach at, they have somewhat of a running gag, a running joke about me that I don't like testimonies.

That's really not true. It's just a lot of testimonies are a little tough to get through. You hear a 45-minute testimony and you get 40 minutes of how big of a sinner the person was and five minutes of now they're saved.

When people come and talk to me and they want to give me their testimony at the church, I always say, I don't mean to be rude, but I don't care about your past.

I don't care what kind of sinner you were. Tell me what Jesus Christ is doing in your life right now. Because every single believer shares the same testimony.

In eternity past, before the foundation of the world, God determined I was His. I was born a sinner in this fallen world, and God who sent His Son to already pay and atone for my sin knew me from eternity past, drew me to Christ, and His Spirit was placed in me and not only sealed me, but is sanctifying me, perfecting me, making me holy and blameless to one day stand in His presence.

[19 : 11] That's the testimony of every single believer. Notice in that testimony, all the work is God's. All the benefit is mine.

God's God's name, can there be anything more worthy of thanks, more worthy of praise, more reason to glorify Him, and you may ask, well, why were we chosen and called?

In verse 2, we see these words, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ.

See, the real problem is that man wants to make everything about himself. He made the choice. All creation was designed for him.

Everything was created for man to choose. Man makes himself the focal point of Christ's work.

Christ died, they say, so that I could be saved. Because man is loved so much by God that God had to save us.

[20 : 30] As the late great R.C. Sproul used to say, what's wrong with you people? None of this is about you.

This plan of redemption is not centered on us. Creation is not about us. It's not about you. It's not about me. All of creation is about God.

It's all to glorify God. God the Father loves God the Son and plans the glorification of God the Son. In eternity past, God determined the best way that he would be glorified is to create a people. And he set them apart for himself. And his son, he gives them to his son.

But every single one of those people are born into this world. Sinners, fallen, separated. And when the Son redeems them, they exalt God the Son, which glorifies God the Father.

[21 : 34] All of creation is about God the Father. All of redemption is about God the Son, who glorifies the Father, redeeming his people. And God the Spirit glorifies the Father by sealing and

sanctifying those same people, all three members of the Godhead working on behalf of the same group of people.

The Father is glorified through all of it because it's all about God.

And this world and creation and redemption is a celebration of the work of the Son. People far too often act like that child that gets invited to another child's birthday party.

And they see all the hoopla about that other child. And they get upset. And they get mad. And they start doing the things to get the attention. And someone has to pull that child aside and say, it's not your birthday.

It's not your party. We are part of a celebration for another. It's a celebration of Jesus Christ. And when he's exalted and celebrated, God is glorified.

[22 : 54] God, stop making it about you. You're being sanctified to obey Jesus Christ. The Christian life is a life of obedience. It's a life lived to be obedience to Christ our Lord.

The Christian life is defined, so to say, as a life of faith, trust, and obedience. And Peter is addressing these exiled believers, encouraging them that you're chosen by God for a life of obedience to Jesus Christ.

And that obedience comes at a price. These believers who made up the audience were facing physical abuse, social outcasting. They were different, and people hated them for it.

Today, this is a struggle for so many believers. They don't want to be outcasts. They don't want to be disliked. They want to fit in with the world. And they far too quickly sacrifice obedience to Christ to be liked by the culture around them.

And it's more troubling when the pastors reacted the same way.

[24 : 07] Steve Lawson once said, the problem with preachers today is not enough people want to kill them. The same can be said for so many superficial Christians who are so afraid to be different from the world.

The first concession they always make are the concessions of obedience. Which then should that tell us whether they're genuine or not?

If they have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, the Holy Spirit working in them, sanctifying them, the fruit of that is that they begin to become more and more obedient to Christ. The Holy Spirit does not move people further away from Christ.

He draws them closer and closer. We begin to die more and more to self. The old us fades further away. The new creature that we become in Christ becomes more and more prevalent.

God did not choose anyone and call them to the Son to move them further away. The genuine believer is conformed more and more to Christ.

[25 : 22] Less of me, more of Christ. In verse 2, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood, may grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

This is written so that the reader, even those who are suffering, even those that may be in pain, even those who may be martyred or facing trials, that they do not forget that you are the elect, you're the chosen of God.

You have the Holy Spirit which is drawing you closer and closer, sanctifying you. As believers, we may face various trials.

We may be ostracized. We may be left out. We may be suffering. We should never, ever forget who we are and in whose we are.

And we see in verse 2 that we see that the work of God's salvation, that it is a triune activity.

[26 : 40] The Father elects, the redemption is accomplished by Christ and the Holy Spirit applies that redemption to the lives that those the Father elected. All three members of the Godhead working on behalf of the same people, His people.

Peter uses a great image in verse 2 to speak of the work of Christ being accomplished for us and He sprinkled and be sprinkled with His blood.

Now while in the New Testament we are purchased with Christ's blood, this is actually a reference to the Old Testament. On the Day of Atonement when the priest would make the sacrifice on behalf of the people, the blood of the animal was taken and it was sprinkled on the Holy Seat.

Or the mercy seat. And it acted as a blood covering for the throne of God. It was symbolic of the covering of our sins by the blood of the sacrifice. All of these practices pointed to the final ultimate sacrifice in the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

even though on the cross Christ's blood was not sprinkled but poured out the same principle as in view.

[28 : 01] It points us to another rich doctrine of grace and that is the doctrine of the definite atonement. Not one drop of Christ's blood was wasted or shed in vain for what some believers believe is a possible atonement or a universal atonement.

On the cross Christ's blood was shed for exactly who it was shed for and not one person more or less. To believe in a universal atonement is to believe that Christ shed His blood for people who will never come to Him and that He then shed that blood in vain.

And that should be near blasphemous to even consider. Not one drop of Christ's blood was wasted. He went to that cross and bled for every single person the Father gave Him in eternity past.

And everyone He shed His blood for will come to Him and be saved. Again, everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, Christ says.

Such great assurance. As a believer, you do not have to question if the payment Christ made for you was good. If you're being sanctified, if you're being drawn closer and closer to Christ, what wonderful assurance you have in the definite atoning work of Christ on that cross on your behalf.

[29 : 30] Peter's assuring believers who are facing persecution and trials that their faith need not be shaken. Remember who you are.

This is a reminder that we need in the face of life in this world, sometimes daily. You're a believer in Christ. You were chosen beforehand.

You've been bought. You've been purchased by the definite work of Christ on the cross. You're being sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. Could there be anything more joyous?

Those who struggled understanding the doctrine of election would say that, what do you mean then? God makes people to go to hell? You know, it's interesting.

Back in 2013, I began a ministry called Seek the Word. And it was an apologetics based ministry. And you know how when you think something's going to go a certain way, but God's like, nope.

[30 : 44] I really saw that ministry as reaching out to those who were atheists and were vocal against the faith. I found more and more pushback and more and more fighting coming from those in the church and especially over these doctrines.

And this was a big argument I would hear. Are you trying to say God makes people to go to hell? And I said, God doesn't have to make anyone to go to hell.

We're running there as fast as we can the minute we get out of the womb. We're completely fallen. We're completely corrupted by our sin. God intervenes on those he's chosen. He calls them out.

And he knows them by name. I love when Jesus uses the imagery of the shepherd and he says that, he tells them that, you don't understand because you're not mine.

[32 : 08] You don't hear my, mine hear my voice. The imagery of that is beautiful because at that time shepherds would go into town with their flock and when they would stay in overnight they would all put their sheep into one giant pen.

They didn't have separate pens for every group of sheep. It was one giant pen with all the sheep in it. And the shepherd had trained their sheep so when they came out in the morning they would call their sheep and their sheep would hear their voice and their sheep would respond to that voice.

And that's the imagery there. Because we're his from eternity past we respond when we hear that voice that call on our life that draw from the Holy Spirit we respond the doctrine of election declares that God before the foundation of the world chose certain individuals from the fallen member of Adam's ancestry to be benefactors of his undeserved favor those that God's purposed to save God could have chosen to save all men he has the power and he has the right and he has the authority to do that or he could have chose to save none he was under no obligation to save anybody but he did neither one of those instead he chose to save some and pass over others some get mercy some get justice no one gets injustice

God's response his choice to save the sinners he chose to save was not based on any forecast act or response on the part of those selected it was based solely on his own good pleasure and sovereign will election was not based on or conditioned upon anything that man would do but it's solely the result of God's self determined purpose there should be nothing more assuring nothing more comforting to us than this God set you apart in eternity past he knew your name he knew you when you were separated from him he sent his son to redeem you and he called you to his son and he provides you with the faith you need to be saved and not because of you but because of him

that's who you are in the midst of your trial in the midst of your struggle in the face of oppression and persecution in the face of elections not going the way we want them to you and in the face of our family rejecting us my fellow aliens in this hostile land remember who you are I've seen more people in the last few years fall apart because things haven't gone the way they thought because they didn't want the pressure they didn't want they really thought that if only we had the right person that were accepted by this group of people it's not about us it's never been about us and we're not a part of this place anymore we're aliens in this world exiles chosen out I want to leave you with a glimpse of what comes later in this letter it's a wonderful verse when you feel defeated when you feel less than joy less than what where you should be when living in this world gets just so crazy and when you forget who you are and what you've been set apart for first [37 : 17] Peter 2 9 but you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for God's own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his light he chose you you're his possession you've been bought and paid for with a price proclaim the excellencies of him that's what we've been called to to what we were chosen for we live in a world where everybody wants to know their purpose everybody wants to know what am I here for a few years back there was a best selling book about a purpose driven life a lot of pages in that book could have been summed up in one sentence what's your purpose glorify

God what's your purpose proclaim the excellencies of him that one doesn't make the new york times best seller though is that who we are is that how we're living is that our life is our life lived in a manner that is proclaiming the excellencies of him does this world when they see us see a people who have been set apart or does it see a people who are trying so desperately to live like them to look like them to walk like them does it see a people who when things don't go our way become crushed and defeated we lose our joy so easily because things just happen in a manner that we don't agree with or do they see a life that's lived that says yes

I see this world but I've been called out of this world I've been called to proclaim the excellencies of him regardless of what this world throws at me disease sickness suffering loss politicians I don't like job changes does our life reflect what we've been called to does our life reflect the one who called us is that how we're living he chose you you're his proclaim the excellencies of him who chose you are you living as someone who's been set apart for him because if you're his don't forget that don't forget whose you are and don't ever forget who called you but your life be a reflection of that in this fallen dark world let's pray dear heavenly father father father father father father father as we look at these words which are spirit inspired your apostle peter just the intro father god is so full of truth and doctrine father we pray that our lives are lived in a manner, a manner that's proclaiming your excellencies, a manner in which is worthy of the call, Father, a call out of this world.

Father, we thank you for calling us out of this dark world. We thank you for setting us apart in eternity past, as undeserving as we are, even though we could bring nothing ever to the table. Father, you knew us. You called us. You redeemed us. You seal us, and you're keeping us, Father God.

[42 : 27] And you tell us, Father, that we have an inheritance, and you're keeping that inheritance for us, and you're keeping us for that inheritance. Your Holy Spirit has sealed us.

Let our lives be lived in a manner, Father, which proclaims those things. Let our lives be lived in a manner of someone, Father, who is yours and not this world's, who doesn't desire to be a part of this world, doesn't desire to be accepted by this world, but understands that they have already been chosen by the only one that matters, you.

Let us proclaim your excellencies in this celebration that's all about you. what an amazing gift you've given us, Father God, that we are so unworthy of.

Let our lives be lived as living praise and worship to glorify you in all that we do, Father, in your Son's precious name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.